


Ageways

ISSUE

69

Practical issues in ageing and development

JUNE 2007



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Comment

Building bridges

Welcome to *Ageways* 69.

Development projects often focus on particular age groups, such as mothers and babies, children, adolescents or older people. This is necessary to address these groups' particular needs.

However, many projects overlook the interdependence of different generations and are consequently less effective than they could be.

This issue of *Ageways* highlights the value of taking an intergenerational approach to development. In particular, it shows how projects that involve older people and children benefit both generations and contribute to social cohesion.

We hope you find it useful and we welcome your comments.

Celia Till and Lewis Temple
Editors

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Future issues

Ageways is published twice a year. Issue 70, due in October 2006, will be on social protection. We welcome articles for consideration by the end of July.

Letters

International Day of Older Persons

Greetings from Elders Welfare – Kenya. Please advise us of the date of the next International Day of Older Persons.

Enoch Wasida, Elders Welfare – Kenya (by email).

Editor's reply:

International Day of Older Persons is celebrated on or around 1 October each year. HelpAge International is encouraging older people's organisations to use this occasion to remind their governments of the promises they made in signing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) in 2002.

In particular, HelpAge International is calling on governments to provide universal social pensions, free healthcare and anti-discriminatory legislation to realise MIPAA's goals. These goals include:

- Sufficient minimum income for all older persons, paying particular attention to socially and economically disadvantaged groups (paragraph 53)
- Elimination of social and economic inequalities based on age, gender or any other ground, including linguistic barriers, to ensure that older persons have universal and equal access to healthcare (paragraph 74)
- Recognition of the social, cultural, economic and political contribution of older persons: ensure the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by promoting the implementation of human rights conventions and other human rights instruments, particularly in combating all forms of discrimination (paragraph 21).

For more information contact your HelpAge International regional or country office (see page 15) or visit: www.helpage.org/Researchandpolicy

News

Funding for women's projects

Mama Cash is a Netherlands-based organisation that funds initiatives by women across the world to strengthen women's rights. Applicants should:

- be small, locally-based and relatively new
- be innovative, groundbreaking, taboo-breaking, and pioneering
- have limited access to larger funding sources
- primarily promote awareness of women's rights and advance positive change for women in laws, policies and practices
- be a women's organisation run by women and where the majority of staff members are also women (in exceptional cases, Mama Cash also funds non-women's groups with a strong gender focus, or programmes working to improve women's position in society)
- apply for amounts between €500 (US\$680) and €20,000 (US\$27,000) per year per project (Mama Cash occasionally gives multiple-year grants)
- do not focus mainly or only on income-generating activities, credit programmes, welfare and traditional skill training projects.

You can apply for a project grant or general support if you meet these requirements, and if your group works on one or more of Mama Cash's themes: economic justice; peace and security; agency and participation; art, culture and media. You can also apply for a travel grant.

More information: Mama Cash, Eerste Helmersstraat 17 III, PO Box 15686, 1001 ND Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
Tel: +31 20 689 36 34
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Web: www.mamacash.nl/site/en/index.php

Publications



I like the age I am

The situation of older people and the work of HelpAge International and its partners in South East Europe are described in a new report, *I like the age I am: Empowering disadvantaged older people to combat discrimination in South East Europe*.

South East Europe has gone through rapid change over the last 18 years, with the collapse of the communist regimes, conflict across much of the former Yugoslavia, and, more recently, the European Union accession process.

Correction

In the item in *Ageways* 68 about the Solidarity Fund set up by the Dutch NGO, Unie KBO, there was a mistake in the fax number. The correct fax number is: +33 73 6891015.

In addition, an alternative email address that can be used is: info@uniekbo.nl

Thank you to Semanda Richard, Project Director, The Aged Family Uganda (TAFU) for pointing this out.

Poverty levels in many countries are slowly decreasing. However, many of the 11 million older people in the region remain disproportionately poor, discriminated against and socially excluded.

Family support systems are being eroded by migration of younger generations. One older widow in Sarajevo, showing pictures of her daughter, said: 'I haven't seen her for seven years. She moved to Switzerland during the war. She has to look after her own family.' Dog-eared birthday cards from her daughter were carefully placed back in her bag.

HelpAge International and 12 partners in nine countries – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia – undertook training, networking and local self-help initiatives to enable older people to challenge discrimination and poverty. The report presents the results of the programme and recommends action by civil society organisations, governments, and donor agencies and the UN.

The report is also being published in Albanian, Bosnian, Macedonian, Romanian and Serbian. Copies can be downloaded from: www.helpage.org/Resources

For print copies please contact: Alenka Ogrin, Administrator, HelpAge International South East Europe (address on page 15).

Ageing in religion

The Association for Senior Citizens (ASC) is a non-political, non-government, non-profit organisation devoted to the cause of older people. To commemorate its twentieth anniversary in 2006, a seminar on

'Senior citizens and society' was organised in Mumbai.

It was also decided to bring out some publications of interest to senior citizens. *Ageing in Hinduism and other religions*, by Dr Mrs Chandra Dave, is the first of these. The booklet consists of a commentary and quotes from a number of Hindu and other religious texts.

The author notes that both as receivers and givers to society, older people are dwelt upon with affection by texts of different religions and preachers. Respect and duties towards older people, as well as reciprocal obligations, are referred to in many religious texts. For example:

Those who serve the aged, get longer life, attain higher knowledge, fame and strength.

Hinduism: 2.21 Manusmriti

Son support the old age of thy father and give him not pain in his life.

Christianity: Ecclesiasticus 3.14

Be kind to parents whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life.

Islam: Sura 23, The Holy Quran

Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honour the face of the old man. Judaism: Leviticus 19:32

More information: Mr K L Khandpur, President, Association for Senior Citizens, G-23, Venus Apartments, Worli, Mumbai – 400 018, India.

We welcome letters from readers.

Please write to: The Editor, Ageways, HelpAge International, PO Box 32832, London N1 9ZN, UK.

Fax: +44 20 7713 7993

Email: ctill@helpage.org

Please include your name, organisation (if any) and postal address.

Letters may be edited.

Promoting solidarity

Lewis Temple explains what is meant by an intergenerational approach, and why this approach needs to be more widely adopted.



Jaime Andres Gomez/HelpAge International

A displaced grandmother and grandchild who live alone together in Colombia.

An intergenerational approach is one that builds on existing relationships between different generations. It enables the strengths of two or more generations to complement each other, to the benefit of both or all the generations concerned.

Why this approach?

In many societies, older and younger generations have become increasingly polarised. Older people are often perceived, both by others and by themselves, as a burden on younger generations. The huge contribution they make to their families and communities often goes unrecognised.

In other societies, there is a long standing tradition of older people

caring for children. Respect for elders is instilled in young people as part of their upbringing. However, even in these societies, crises such as poverty, changing family structures, migration, conflict, and HIV and AIDS are putting extra pressures on families and communities and straining intergenerational relationships.

In many communities, particularly in Africa, the AIDS epidemic has thrown the younger and older generations together. In southern Africa, more than half of orphans live with their grandparents. Often these families receive little or no help to cope with the enormous emotional, economic and social consequences of AIDS.

With greater global mobility in recent years and the difficult economic situation many societies are seeing, particularly in Eastern Europe and

Latin America, large numbers of the working-age population emigrate to seek work. They often leave children in the care of grandparents.

In Moldova, for example, up to one-quarter of the working-age population has gone abroad for work. This has left nearly one-third of children living without one or both parents and 7 per cent without either parent, according to the Moldova Demographic and Health Survey. In Bolivia, more than half of households headed by older people in rural areas include grandchildren whose parents have left to work in the cities.

Conflicts around the world have also torn families apart and left many older people caring for children. About 30 per cent of older people living in displaced people's camps in Darfur, Sudan are responsible for grandchildren or other young dependants. In the Colombian city of Cali, more than one-third of older people displaced by the country's long-running civil war, who seek assistance from the voluntary organisation, Fundación Paz y Bien, arrive with children in their care.

Many children and older people live in multigenerational households. These are often among the poorest families. Experience has shown that older people who receive a social pension use some of their income to educate, feed and clothe the family, particularly children.

Mutual benefits

The interdependence between different generations, and the contributions of older generations to their families and communities, are widely ignored in development projects.

'I look after my grandchildren, orphans of one of my daughters. Their father abandoned them, so I have to feed us all.'

Doña Eulogia Guzmán, subsistence farmer, Northern Potosí, Bolivia

Some projects have actually damaged relationships between younger and older people, by separating the generations or failing to acknowledge how they interact with each other. For example, a health promotion project in Malawi selected younger women for training because they were literate. These younger women were then expected to teach their families, including older women, what they had learnt – though teaching their elders went against the local culture.

Other projects suggest that the ideas and practices of the older generation are damaging. While some traditional practices are indeed harmful, it is rare that initiatives attempting to change such practices include older people. Experience from those that do shows older people to be receptive to change.

The value of promoting inter-generational solidarity is recognised

in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA). MIPAA, adopted by United Nations member states in 2002, commits governments to promoting intergenerational solidarity between generations at all levels – in families, communities and nations – as fundamental for the achievement of a society for all ages (see page 13).

Intergenerational approaches are particularly useful for:

- social cohesion – age awareness activities promote understanding and respect
- community development – all generations have a role; many people live in multigenerational households, particularly poorer people
- child and youth education – support of adults is necessary, including grandparents
- situations where grandparents are caring for children, for example,

because of migration, conflict, or HIV and AIDS – these families face particular problems which need recognition and support.

An essential starting point is to collect household and community information broken down by age and sex. This helps to identify the most vulnerable people and make them visible to policy makers and programme planners.

An intergenerational approach can be taken by ensuring that different generations are included in the research, design and implementation of the project, and that the older and younger generations are supported to plan and monitor the activities together.

Some actions that specifically aim to promote intergenerational solidarity include:

- Strengthen older people's ability to care for and educate younger generations, through clubs, volunteer support and training.
- Provide financial support to older people for the benefit of themselves and their families.
- Provide special assistance to older people in their role as carers.
- Organise age awareness sessions with children in schools to promote greater intergenerational understanding.
- Target livelihoods interventions at older people to raise their status, respect and dignity in the community and with the younger generations.

Lewis Temple is Regional Representative, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, HelpAge International, based in the London office (address on page 16). Email: ltemple@helpage.org

Intergenerational projects

- ✓ **Benefit both older and younger generations**
- ✓ **Address discrimination experienced by older and younger people**
- ✓ **Promote active citizenship and community development by increasing understanding of other people within the community, particularly other generations**
- ✓ **Engage those who feel isolated from society**
- ✓ **Build on the strengths of the different generations, rather than simply focusing on their problems**
- ✓ **Harness older people's huge pool of knowledge and experience for the benefit of the entire community.**

Issues for grandparents and orphans

These are some of the issues facing older people and children in their care, together with suggested solutions.

Problem

Poverty

- Older people have limited capacity to earn a living.
- Those affected by AIDS may have sold their assets to pay for treatment.
- Older carers may not have enough income to pay children's costs.
- Children may lack day-to-day essentials, including food, clothes and bedding.
- Children may have to work instead of going to school.

Poor health

- Older carers are often exhausted from caring for children (especially women); or from working extra to earn an income (especially men).
- They suffer from stress-related illnesses such as stomach ulcers and hypertension.
- Children's health may suffer from poor nutrition and doing extra work in the house.

Emotional stress

- Older people and children grieve for relatives who are away or have died.
- Children need emotional support, in particular love.
- Older people may despair at being unable to care adequately for children.
- Older people and children worry about what will happen when grandparents can no longer care for them.
- Older carers may be too busy to maintain their social network.
- Older people and children affected by AIDS often suffer stigma and discrimination.

Strain on relationships

- Grandparents may have difficulty asserting their authority.
- Children who move to be with their grandparents have to adjust to a different culture and values.

Lack of knowledge about HIV and AIDS

- Older people may not know how to care for sick children or adults.

Solution

Poverty

- Assistance to claim entitlements such as social pensions, child support grants and free healthcare.
- Credit and training for income-generating activities.
- Seeds and other agricultural inputs.
- Lobbying for a social pension.
- Help for children to go to school, such as waiving fees.
- Vocational training for young people.
- Adult education such as literacy for older people.
- Civic education to know about rights.

Poor health

- Improved access to healthcare, such as help with transport.
- Health services that cater for older people and children.
- Home visits and health check-ups for older people and children.

Emotional stress

- Psychosocial support to older and younger people, such as peer counselling, age awareness-raising, HIV and AIDS education, older people's associations, children's clubs, day centres, discussion groups, inheritance planning and memory books.

Strain on relationships

- Support groups for older and younger people.
- Clubs and activities that promote intergenerational solidarity.
- Awareness-raising in schools of older people's role.
- Involvement of older people in children's education.

Lack of knowledge about HIV and AIDS

- Training and peer education on caring for someone with HIV or AIDS.

Closing the gap in Darfur

The long drawn-out conflict in Darfur, Sudan has fragmented communities and created divisions between older and younger generations. HelpAge International is working with child-focused agencies to help close the gap.



Gina Bramucci/HelpAge International

Darfur camps include older carers.

Traditionally, older people in Darfur were highly esteemed by other members of their communities, including young people. They had a role as peacemakers, they were sought out for advice, and they were responsible for teaching young children about the Quran, history and traditions.

Many older people still have significant contact with children. About 30 per cent of older people in displaced people's camps are responsible for grandchildren or other young dependants. But older people's traditional role has become less dominant in camps for displaced

people, leaving a growing gap between older and younger generations.

A field officer from UNICEF commented: 'The grandmother was once a very powerful cultural institution in Darfur. Children would sit with her each evening after the family meal to hear stories about family history and local fables. Now the children go to child-friendly spaces in the camps, so they don't sit with the grandmother any more.'

Agencies with protection mandates for children have put a great deal of emphasis on creating child-friendly spaces, or children's centres, as a child protection initiative. But only nominal progress has been made towards involving older generations in these initiatives.

Sense of shame

The relationship between older people and adolescents can become particularly problematic. In interviews carried out by HelpAge International staff in six camps in 2005-2006, older people expressed sadness and, at times, shame when they were confronted by young people who would once have looked to them for help and guidance.

Adolescents, like older people, are a neglected group in west Darfur. They have limited access to secondary education and livelihood opportunities. Many are bored and frustrated and feel they have nothing

to lose by seeking material gain through violence. As the security situation in west Darfur has worsened, United Nations security officers have noted more young people becoming involved in incidents of banditry and carjacking by armed groups.

HelpAge International is working with youth-focused agencies to promote intergenerational approaches in west Darfur, such as:

- Include older people as story-tellers in child-friendly spaces.
- Pilot solar cookers to reduce the need for adolescent girls to collect firewood outside camps, where they are at risk of being raped.
- Involve adolescents in older people's centres set up by HelpAge International for small-scale handicraft activities, literacy and numeracy clubs, and social activities, as requested by adolescent girls.
- Include older women in women's centres.
- Support livelihood activities by older people and adolescents, including cooperative gardens and livestock rearing.
- Encourage groups of young people to repair shelters belonging to the most vulnerable older people, on a food-for-work basis.
- Train older and younger people to facilitate dialogue between the generations, particularly about traditional problem-solving techniques and how these could be used in the camps.

This article is taken from HelpAge International's report, Rebuilding lives in longer-term emergencies (details on page 14).

More information: Warren Wright, Darfur Emergency Programme Manager, HelpAge International. Email: programmes@helpagesudan.org

Strong grandmothers, healthy communities

In many societies, grandmothers play an important role in the care and education of children. How can this role be strengthened?

Grandmothers have considerable influence on child development and are committed to promoting the wellbeing of children and their families. Policy guidelines from key international child-focused agencies advocate for supporting family members to respond to children's needs.

Yet very few community health and early childhood education programmes actively involve grandmothers. The exclusion of grandmothers appears to arise from negative attitudes and from programme models that ignore local culture.

For example, it is widely assumed that older women have little influence on the way that younger family members care for babies and children, and that the influence they have is generally negative. Older women who are not literate are assumed to be unintelligent and therefore unable to grasp new ideas. Older people are perceived to be unable to learn and unwilling to change. Older women are often seen as needy and dependent.

These stereotypes are reinforced by age-discriminatory attitudes which are embedded in Western, youth-focused cultures. These attitudes appear to influence the policies and programmes of many Western-oriented development agencies.

In many countries, school curricula are also based largely on Western models. Schoolchildren are often torn between the traditional values of their families and communities, and those that are taught in schools.



A child's view of her grandmother, from the grandmother booklet (see box).

Higher status

An organisation that promotes the inclusion of grandmothers in health and education projects for women and children is the Grandmother Project. The Grandmother Project is a USA and Italy-based non-profit organisation set up in 2004 by Judi Aubel, an adult education and community health specialist with more than twenty years' experience of working in developing countries. Its slogan is: 'Strong grandmothers, healthy communities.'

'The focus of many development projects on youth actually contributes to the generation gap,' says Judi Aubel.

'We have found that involving grandmothers strengthens intergenerational communication, both between grandmothers and their daughters and daughters-in-law, and between grandmothers and their grandchildren. Because the grandmothers' knowledge and experience are acknowledged, their status in the family and community is improved.'

'It is grandmothers who teach children important traditional values like empathy, solidarity with other family members, generosity and patience.'

Amadou Cissé, Senegalese teacher

The Grandmother Project supports community-based organisations and NGOs to assess the roles of grandmothers and other household members, learn grandmother-inclusive approaches, and plan and implement projects where grandmothers are key actors.

It also works directly with communities to build grandmother networks, train grandmothers and establish 'community forums' for community members, including grandmothers, to discuss priority issues.

The principles underlying the Grandmother Project's work are:

- acknowledging grandmothers' experience and contribution to family wellbeing
- involving key family members with grandmothers to address issues related to women and children
- using participatory, adult learning methods for dialogue and problem-solving
- strengthening intergenerational communication.

The experience of the Grandmother Project's work on maternal and child health, nutrition and hygiene education in Africa, Asia and Latin America shows that:

- grandmothers are open to learning and adopting new ideas, especially when participatory learning methods are used, based on respect and dialogue
- including grandmothers and encouraging them to combine 'new' and 'traditional' ideas increases their knowledge, confidence and commitment to promoting the wellbeing of women and children
- young women are more likely to adopt 'new' practices if grandmothers recommend those same ideas.

More information:

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Grandmother booklet raises awareness

The Grandmother Project worked with teachers and community development workers in southern Senegal, West Africa, to develop a booklet on the role of grandmothers in the local culture for use in schools and literacy classes. They were supported by district education advisors, Malang Sagna and Ferdinand Keny.

The project, funded by World Vision, aimed to improve communication between older people and school-age children. It encouraged teachers to develop activities that would help to bridge the gap between home and school, and increase children's interest in and respect for positive cultural roles and traditions.

'Broader cultural issues and knowledge of elders are often not discussed in the classroom,' says Judi Aubel, director of the Grandmother Project. 'Teachers tend to have a bias against grandparents because they didn't go to school. Even if your ultimate goal is to reach children, you need first to work with teachers to change their attitude.'

The role of grandmothers in Halpular society describes the various roles of grandmothers, and includes songs, proverbs and discussion points. It is illustrated throughout with children's drawings from a competition that was run in 14 schools.

Workshops were organised with 240 primary and secondary school teachers in 2006 to discuss how the booklet could be used in classroom activities, how grandmothers and grandfathers could become involved in school learning activities, and how students could become involved



in recording the traditional knowledge and wisdom of elders.

Plans for activities that have been inspired by the booklet include:

- story-telling by grandmothers in the classroom and discussion with children on the moral lessons of each story
- using the booklet as reading material for primary and secondary school students and for adults in adult literacy classes
- organising 'story-telling evenings' in the community for families, during which grandmothers tell their favourite tales
- presentation of skits by children based on different chapters in the booklet with community groups.

The booklet has helped to increase older people's confidence and respect for them. 'I have never seen a book that talks about our role in society. It is true what it says that we do all that we can to ensure the wellbeing of the family. But usually our role isn't recognised,' said Coumbayel Mballo, a grandmother.

Demba Balde, a school teacher, said: 'This initiative will increase grandmothers' confidence in themselves and commitment to their important work in the family. It will help show them that we respect their role and their knowledge.'

Club for *sharing traditions*

A Grandparents and Grandchildren Club in Moldova is enabling older and younger generations to learn from each other, write Liliana Popusoi and Tatiana Sorocan.



Maxim Ahner/HelpAge International

Nina Vutcariov (left) hosts a buffet.

In Moldova, large numbers of younger adults go abroad to look for work. Many leave their children in the care of grandparents. Both older people and children miss their absent relatives, who may be away for years on end.

The Grandparents and Grandchildren club in Ialoveni was started in 2006 by a local voluntary organisation, the Organisation of Veterans of War and Labour. This is a group of about thirty older people who provide social services to vulnerable older people.

The idea for the club came from one of the children themselves. Valentina Carchelan, leader of the Organisation of Veterans, explains: 'We often invite children to our activities. At one meeting, while listening to older people talking about their problems, a young girl asked if children could invite their grandparents to the meetings. Thus the idea of the club was formed.'

The club has about twenty members including older men and women, children and adolescents. They meet each week to cook together, do

knitting, crochet and embroidering, perform drama, recite poems, sing, and dance (children modern, grandparents traditional).

The club has also bought seeds, pots and fertiliser to grow tomatoes and cucumbers – an important skill in Moldova's agricultural economy.

Today the club is meeting in the house of 72-year-old Nina Vutcariov. Nina Vutcariov is a volunteer with the Organisation of Veterans, whose husband died a year ago. She regularly visited three isolated older people. After they died, she devoted herself to the Grandparents and Grandchildren Club.

'I am very glad when my house is full of guests, as I'm not alone,' she says. 'Today we will study how to set a buffet table and cook an apple pie, which is my speciality. I am helped by the children. I don't make any distinction between my grandchildren and other people's grandchildren. All of them are ours.'

After everyone has eaten, they sing songs and do embroidery. The girls sing about their parents who have left to work abroad, and the grandparents then sing a traditional Moldovan song.

Luminita Bumbu, aged 13, attends the club every week. 'My grandparents died before I was able to know them, but here I have many grandmothers,' she says. 'The things I learn in the club are useful to me. I am learning how to do crochet and embroidery, and how to set a dinner party. Most of all, I like to learn old songs from the older people.'

Children's song

*When spring is on its way again
Snowdrops start to flower in the lane
And I gather them with much love
But in vain, for my parents are so far away
My Mum is abroad and my Dad is away
Making money and saving every day*

Refrain:

*A snowdrops' bouquet for my parents away
Sits in the vase by the window pane
With no care at all for my pain
Spring water I give them to drink
And I water them and wait as we both anticipate
The moment of giving the bouquet*

*A bright colour photo
Of my parents came my way
I have placed it by my vase
For my wish to come my way...
But before the day when we three
Are together again, I'm afraid
My snowdrops will have faded away*

Refrain:

A snowdrops' bouquet...

Liliana Popusoi is a Moldovan journalist and Tatiana Sorocan works for HelpAge International in Moldova. The Organisation of Veterans is a partner of HelpAge International and Rural Social Initiative in a project funded by the European Union and Irish Aid.

More information:

Tatiana Sorocan, HelpAge International, South-East Europe (address on page 15). Email: haimoldova@mail.ru

School students *lend a hand*

Competitions for Tanzanian school students are helping to improve relations between older and younger people, write Livingstone Byekwaso and Smart Daniel.



SAWATA Karagwe

An older woman in Karagwe receives assistance from school students.

Competitions for drawing, essay-writing and designing community projects have been organised each year since 1999 by HelpAge International and Tanzanian NGO, SAWATA-Karagwe.

About 2,300 primary schools participated in the competitions in 2006. The theme of the essay and drawing competitions was: 'Older people are greatly affected by HIV/AIDS; hence they too need assistance from the government, civil society organisations and society in general.'

The community projects had to aim to raise awareness of older people and provide practical benefits to them. Entrants had to provide evidence of a needs assessment, a well-presented proposal and a realistic budget. Six winners in 2006 were each awarded grants of Tzs 850,000 (US\$668) for the project and a further Tzs 200,000 (US\$157) for their school.

Television, radio and newspaper coverage encouraged participation in the competitions and raised awareness of ageing issues more broadly.

Winning design

Karagwe Secondary School was one of the winners of the community project design competition in 2006, with a proposal to establish an older people's club. The club has 80 student members who visit local older people to help with cleaning, errands and house repairs. Club members have also started a vegetable garden.

Revelian Ishengoma, aged 70, has received help with house repairs. 'At first I didn't trust the students and was reluctant to talk to them, but as they continued coming to my place we built friendship and trust,' he says. 'Now we can talk and joke with each other. The students have been very helpful to my family and paid for repairing my home. I feel more secure and recognised in the community.'

Karagwe Secondary School headmaster Mr J Kabalimu says that the project has improved relations, not only between students and older people, but also between students and the wider community.

'Students now respect older people to the extent that some of them even contribute their pocket money to support vulnerable older people. This was not the case before. The majority of students saw poor older people as useless,' he says.

'The project has also created good relationships between school students and the neighbouring community. Most students come from outside the community and are regarded as foreigners. Before this project students could not interact with anyone outside the school fence.'

Audax Stephan, a student from Karagwe Secondary School, has enjoyed learning from older people. 'The project has been helpful to us because we have been exposed to the wisdom of senior citizens. Their knowledge of historical events cannot be found in the history books we have in our schools,' he says.

The project has also led local leaders to recognise older people as a distinct group that needs to be provided for under the national development plans. The local government in Karagwe has allocated Tzs 21 million (US\$16,640) in 2007/2008 for house repairs and HIV education for older people.

Livingstone Byekwaso is project coordinator, SAWATA Karagwe. Smart Daniel is programme officer, HelpAge International Tanzania.

The schools competitions are part of a broader project to improve the quality of life of vulnerable older people in Tanzania, funded by the European Union.

*More information:
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A question of authority

A project in Tanzania is helping to relieve tensions between older people and orphans, writes Josien de Klerk.



Josien de Klerk

Grandparents and orphans in their care can benefit from psychosocial support.

One of the problems faced by older men and women who are caring for orphaned grandchildren in Kagera, north-west Tanzania relates to authority.

Normally, grandparents and grandchildren have what is called a joking relationship. A grandmother can jokingly call her grandson 'my husband', implying an equal relationship with the child. When a grandparent dies, the grandchildren are allowed to wear the dead person's clothes and impersonate them. They may dance on their grandparent's grave to the beat of the Ngoma drums.

The authoritative relationship that exists between parents and children has traditionally been unnecessary between grandparents and grandchildren. The AIDS epidemic has changed this, however. Grand-

parents need to establish a new relationship with their grandchildren. This can be difficult and problems often arise with authority.

One 78-year-old woman has been raising orphans for 14 years. She cares for three young children and a 16-year-old. However, a 19-year-old in her care recently ran away. The woman comments that as children grow up, they stop listening. 'The child of my daughter... is already spoiled,' she says. 'She no longer listens to anyone who talks to her.'

Problems often occur when children who have grown up in town are sent back to their grandparents' village after their parents have died. One older man explains: 'My son and his wife died. They were staying in Mwanza. The children were used to town life. So when you bring the child here, they act as an adult, and look down on you.'

Children who have always lived in the same village as their grandparents also experience problems, however. They have been raised in a certain way by their parents. They and their grandparents have to adjust to each other. The values that grandparents try to teach their grandchildren do not always fit the lifestyle of young people, which is often strongly influenced by video, radio and commodities such as mobile phones.

Recognising these problems, Kwa Wazee, a community-based organisation for older people in the Nshamba area of Kagera, has established psychosocial support groups for older carers and orphans.

About 50 grandmothers and 80 grandchildren participate in three groups. The groups aim to improve understanding between grandparents and grandchildren by discussing:

- daily life – joy and hardship, cooperation between grandparents and grandchildren, childhood in the past and present, and approaches to education
- the future – what will happen to the children, and preparing for change
- HIV and AIDS – silence, sexuality and knowledge.

Kwa Wazee is also building networks of grandparents and grandchildren to promote self-help, developing projects to reduce the workload of grandparents and grandchildren, and providing pensions for older people.

Josien de Klerk is an anthropologist from the University of Amsterdam. She is working on a dissertation, 'Being old in times of AIDS: making sense of loss in north-west Tanzania.'

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Volunteering for a healthy society

In post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, volunteering by older and younger people is helping to strengthen communities, writes Měsa Hasić.



Osmijeh

Older people share musical traditions.

War in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 1990s left communities fragmented and large numbers of older people without family support or government services. An organisation that is helping to foster community development through volunteering is Osmijeh, the Association for Psychosocial Help and Development of Voluntary Work.

Founded in Gračanica in 1996, Osmijeh places particular emphasis on different generations working together to build a healthy society. It supports more than 3,000 schoolchildren and 1,000 older people to volunteer, with funding from the Big Lottery Fund.

Amra, a schoolgirl from Gračanica, has been helping two isolated older women for the past two years.

She calls to see them each morning on her way to school. She is the first to open their doors and ask them how they are. She says she feels happy when they are fine. She brings them books from the school library, which she reads out loud to them.

In October each year, young volunteers organise a food collection for older people in the Gračanica municipality who cannot provide themselves with enough food for the winter. This activity is organised with the support of older volunteers.

Older volunteers also help young people. A retired violinist and an accordion player teach young people to play instruments and perform traditional dances. Older volunteers sometimes organise collections to help children pay for school excursions.

There are many other examples of mutual help between older and younger volunteers. Ajiša Softić is an older woman who lives alone. Older volunteers started to renovate her house. Later younger people joined in, and together they completed the work in ten days. In a similar way, older and younger volunteers renovated the local cultural centre.

Osmijeh's view is that if older people waited for help from the government to solve their problems, many of them would be left alone to suffer.

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Call for action

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) recommends the following actions to strengthen solidarity between generations:

- ✓ Promote understanding of ageing through public education as an issue of concern to the entire society.
- ✓ Consider reviewing existing policies to ensure that they foster solidarity between generations and thus promoting social cohesion.
- ✓ Develop initiatives aimed at promoting mutual, productive exchange between the generations, focusing on older persons as a societal resource.
- ✓ Maximise opportunities for maintaining and improving intergenerational relations in local communities, inter alia, by facilitating meetings for all age groups and avoiding generational segregation.
- ✓ Consider the need to address the specific situation of the generation of people who have to care, simultaneously, for their parents, their own children and their grand children.
- ✓ Promote and strengthen solidarity among generations and mutual support as a key element for social development.
- ✓ Initiate research on the advantages and disadvantages of different living arrangements for older persons, including familial co-residence and independent living in different cultures and settings.

Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002, paragraph 44 (see also Resources on page 14).

Resources

Publications

Grandmothers: a learning institution

Reviews literature on the roles of grandmothers in different non-Western cultures, analyses the policies of key international organisations that promote child development, and reviews child development projects that have explicitly engaged grandmothers. Recommends ways to increase grandmothers' involvement in basic education strategies.

Written by Judi Aubel, The Grandmother Project. Published by USAID, 2005.

Intergenerational practice

Factsheet on what 'intergenerational' means, benefits of an inter-generational approach, and types of intergenerational practice.

Age Concern England.
Can be downloaded from:
www.ageconcern.org.uk

The intergenerational approach to development: bridging the generation gap

Summary of an assessment by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), commissioned by UNICEF, of how an intergenerational approach can enhance positive adolescent development and provide direction for incorporating this approach in programmes.

ICRW, 2003.
Can be downloaded from:
<http://iyp.oxfam.org/documents>

Participatory research with older people

Provides guidelines for older people's participation in planning, carrying out and disseminating research.

HelpAge International, 2002.

Coping with love: older people and HIV/AIDS in Thailand

Highlights the issues faced by older people affected by HIV and AIDS in

HelpAge International publications can be ordered or downloaded free of charge from:
www.helpage.org/Resources

If you do not have web access, you can order them from the London office (address on page 16).

Thailand, the contributions they make to their households, and the lack of services and support available to them.

Available in English and Thai.
HelpAge International Asia-Pacific Regional Development Centre, 2005.

The cost of love: older people in the fight against AIDS in Tanzania

Presents key issues facing older women and men affected by HIV and AIDS in Tanzania, including their role in providing care and support to their sons and daughters living with HIV and AIDS and to their grandchildren.

HelpAge International Tanzania, 2004.

Forgotten families: older people as carers of orphans and vulnerable children

Discusses the impact of HIV and AIDS on older people and children, with case studies from Africa and Asia. Contains recommendations for policy makers, programme planners and researchers.

HelpAge International and International HIV/AIDS Alliance, 2003.

Rebuilding lives in longer-term emergencies: older people's experience in Darfur

Highlights the situation of older people who have been displaced in west Darfur as a result of the conflict which began in 2003. Shows the importance of developing longer-term responses across the generational divide.

HelpAge International, 2006.

Inclusive and effective poverty reduction: the case for targeting all age groups in European Union development

Demonstrates the scale and depth of child and old-age poverty, explores how poverty is transferred between generations, and emphasises the interdependence of young and old.

HelpAge International and Save the Children Alliance, 2004.

International agreements

Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) (2002)

MIPAA includes a section calling on governments to promote intergenerational solidarity (paragraphs 42-44):

'Solidarity between generations at all levels – in families, communities and nations – is fundamental for the achievement of a society for all ages. Solidarity is also a major prerequisite for social cohesion and a foundation of formal public welfare and informal care systems...

'The great majority of people in all cultures maintain close relations with their families throughout their lives. These relationships work in both directions, with older persons often providing significant contributions both financially and, crucially, in the education and care of grandchildren and other kin. All sectors of society, including governments, should aim to strengthen those ties...'

MIPAA lists seven actions to achieve the objective of 'Strengthening solidarity through equity and reciprocity between generations' (these are listed in the box on page 13).

Can be downloaded in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Russian from:
www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

Legally-binding document setting out the rights of all children and young people below the age of 18. These are grouped into four categories: the right to survive, to be safe, to belong and to develop.

Can be downloaded from:
www.unicef.org/crc

HelpAge International Affiliates

Caribbean

Action Ageing Jamaica
ECHO, Grenada
HelpAge Barbados/Barbados National Council on Aging
Haitian Society for the Blind
HelpAge Belize
National Council of and for Older Persons/HelpAge St Lucia
Old People's Welfare Association (OPWA), Montserrat
REACH Dominica
Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP), Antigua

Africa

APOSEMO, Mozambique
CEM Outreach, Sierra Leone
Elim Hlanganani Society for the Care of the Aged, South Africa
HelpAge Ghana (HAG)
HelpAge Kenya
HelpAge Zimbabwe

Maseru Women Senior Citizen Association, Lesotho
Mauritius Family Planning Association
Muthande Society for the Aged (MUSA), South Africa
Regional Centre for Welfare of Ageing Persons in Cameroon (RECEWAPEC)
Senior Citizens' Council, Mauritius
Sierra Leone Society for the Welfare of the Aged
Sudanese Society in Care of Older People (SSCOP)
Uganda Reach the Aged Association

Asia/Pacific

Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition (BWHC)
China National Committee on Aging (CNCA)
Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE), Philippines
COTA National Seniors Partnership, Australia
Foundation for Older Persons' Development (FOPDEV), Thailand
HelpAge India
HelpAge Korea

HelpAge Sri Lanka
Helping Hand Hong Kong
Instituto de Acção Social de Macau
Mongolian Association of Elderly People
NACSCOM, Malaysia
Office of Seniors Interests, Australia
Pakistan Medico International
Resource Integration Centre (RIC), Bangladesh
Senior Citizens Association of Thailand
Senior Citizens Council of Thailand
Singapore Action Group of Elders
Tsao Foundation, Singapore
USIAMAS, Malaysia

Europe

Age Concern England
Caritas Malta HelpAge, Malta
Centre for Policy on Ageing, UK
Cordaid, Netherlands
DaneAge Association, Denmark
Elderly Woman's Activities Centre, Lithuania
Help the Aged, UK
Mission Armenia
Second Breath (Gerontological

Association of Moldova)
Slovene Philanthropy
UMUT (Resource Centre for Elderly People), Kyrgyzstan
Zivot 90, Czech Republic

Latin America

Asociación Gerontológica Costarricense (AGECO), Costa Rica
Caritas Chile
CooperAcción, Peru
CESTRA, Colombia
ISALUD, Argentina
Mesa de Trabajo de ONGs sobre Personas Mayores (Lima Co-ordinating Group), Peru
Red de Programas Para al Adulto Mayor, Chile
Pro Vida Bolivia
Pro Vida Colombia
Pro Vida Perú

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Stories and memories

Psychosocial support to older people and children forms part of the Living Together programme run jointly by HelpAge International and UNICEF in northern Mozambique.



An older carer and granddaughter in Tete.

Community members, trained as volunteer counsellors, carry out home visits to families affected by HIV and AIDS in Tete province, Mozambique. They have found that problems faced by older people and children in their care include severe poverty and lack of day-to-day essentials, trauma felt by children when a parent dies, fear of what will happen after a parent dies, and strained relations between grandparents and children.

Older people and children are also affected by lack of knowledge about HIV and AIDS, not knowing how to care for sick young children or older people, and stigma associated with HIV and AIDS.

Children are being supported to compile 'memory books' or boxes containing writing, photos and other items that will remind them of their parents. The process of producing the

memory books helps children and other family members prepare for the death of a parent. After the parent has died, the child has something to keep that reminds them of their parents and helps them maintain a sense of identity and belonging.

Story-telling is helping to improve relationships between older and younger generations. Older people, often retired teachers, are selected by communities to visit schools to talk about local history and culture, and HIV prevention. Some also work individually with children and their carers to talk about their family history, their hopes for the future and how the family can help them achieve these.

In one district, story-tellers are helping children to compile memory books. Some are running courses for older school-students in vocational skills such as weaving, knitting, pottery, basket-weaving, shoe-making, woodwork and metalwork.

As well as giving students useful skills, the training has helped them to form friendships with each other, and to value older people's contribution to their communities and households.

In four communities, day-care centres have been established for pre-school and school-age children to play and eat, and to let older carers take a break from childcare.

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HelpAge International is a global network of not-for-profit organisations with a mission to work with and for disadvantaged older people worldwide to achieve a lasting improvement in the quality of their lives.

Ageways exchanges practical information on ageing and development, particularly good practice developed in the HelpAge International network. It is published twice a year by HelpAge International, with funding from Help the Aged (UK).

Ageways is also available on the web at: <http://www.helpage.org>

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Design: Solutions Design Consultants Ltd, SW20
Printed on recycled paper by Impress Print Services Ltd.
ISSN 1469-6223

Front cover: Salome with three of the six orphaned grandchildren who live with her in Juba, Sudan.
Photo: Kate Holt/HelpAge International



Help the Aged provides core funding to HelpAge International, and is also a leading partner of HelpAge International's global network of not-for-profit organisations.